THE ROMAN TEMPLE AT KEDESH, UPPER GALILEE: A PRELIMINARY STUDY

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I. INTRODUCTION

Ancient Kedesh lies about 15 km. north of Safed and 2 km. northwest of the *moshav* Ramot Naphtali near the Israel-Lebanon border (Fig. 1). The site comprises a tell at the western edge of the Kedesh Valley and a low hill overlooking the valley some 200 m. to the east. (The site appears on maps of the Survey of Israel as Tel Qedesh.) The importance of Kedesh in antiquity is attested both by the surface remains strewn over the site and the numerous references to it in the historical sources. Kedesh is mentioned in one of the Zenon papyri (*PZen*: 59004), as well as in the account of the battle between Jonathan the Hasmonean and the generals of Demetrius according to 1, Macc. XI 53:73 (Abel 1949; see also *Jos. Ant.* XIII, 154). Josephus (*War* IV, 104) relates that Titus' army set up camp at Kedesh during the campaign against Yohanan of Gush Halav and that following the massacre of the Jews of Caesarea in 66 C.E. the latter avenged themselves by attacking many Gentile settlements, including Κάδασα (τῶν) τυρίων, "Kedesh (of) the Tyrians," i.e. Kedesh in the region of Tyre (*Jos. War* II, 459). Kedesh was known as one of the strongholds of Tyre in the Galilee and in unceasing conflict and enmity with the "Galileans" (*Jos. War* IV, 105).

According to both the epigraphical and archaeological evidence, Kedesh flourished during the 2nd–3rd centuries C.E. The town is mentioned also in later historical sources. Thus Eusebius (*Eus. Onom.* 116:10), notes that Kedesh lies 20 miles from Tyre. The 10th century Arab geographer Muqaddasi refers several times to the town (Marmardji 1951:5, 96, 102, 105, 165).

On the hill east of the tell are the remains of a well preserved monumental temple (Pl. 25:1) and west of this are remnants of mausolea and decorated sarcophagi. Rock-hewn tombs were discovered at the north and northwestern fringes of the hill. During the 19th century the site was surveyed in varying detail by Renan (1871:685-686), Guérin (1880:355-362), Wilson (1869:66-71) and especially by Conder and Kitchener of the British Survey of Palestine (*SWP I:* 226-230) whose work has been the main source for our knowledge of the temple until recently. Since these 19th century investigations the site has been explored by only a few scholars (e.g., Fenner 1905:101–102; Dalman 1914; Watzinger 1935:98–99). During 1976–1977 the authors made an extensive survey of the site and in 1981 and 1983–1984 they conducted three seasons of excavations on behalf of the Institute of Archaeology and the Department of Classical Studies of Tel Aviv University.[1]

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1 The archaecological survey, in which the architect Dr. D. Chen participated, was conducted on behalf of the Department of Classical Studies of Tel Aviv University; we would like to thank Prof. Shalom Perlman, Head of the Department, for his encouragement. The excavations, headed by the authors, were carried out with the participation of M. Aviam, A, Amitai and D. Michaeli of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (Mt. Meiron Field School) and the architect G. Solar, Jerusalem.

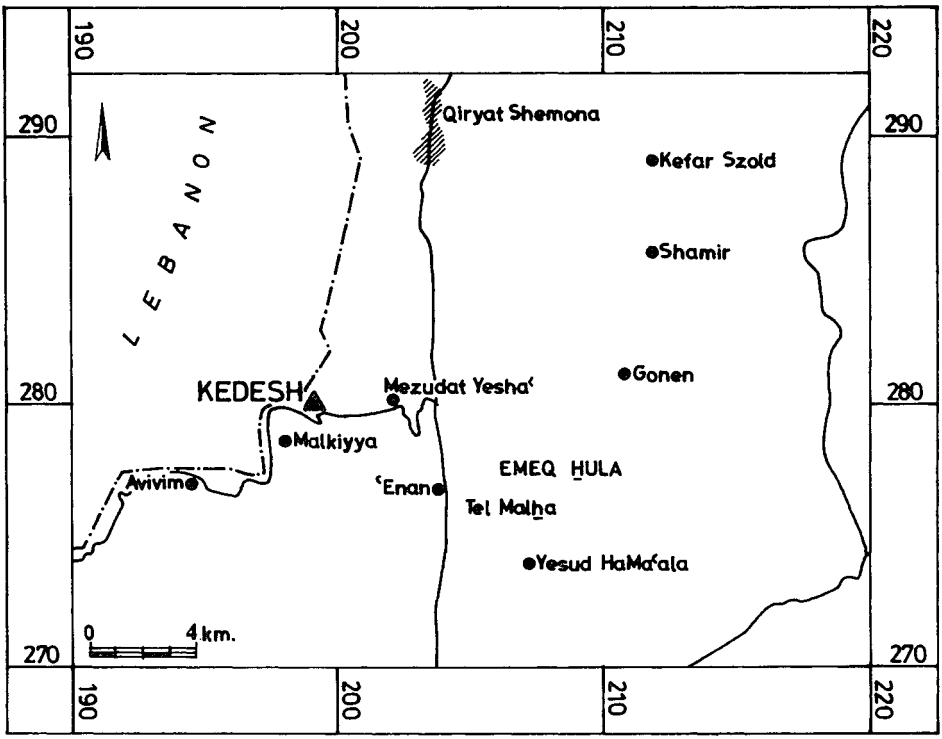

Fig. 1. Location of Kedesh.

II. THE TEMPLE COMPLEX

The architectural complex at Kedesh, located on the upper part of the southern slope of the hill (map ref. 20022/27984), includes a large *temenos* (sacred enclosure) with a monumental temple at its centre (Fig. 2). Numerous architectural fragments are scattered in and around the *temenos.*

1. The peribolos

The *peribolos* enclosing the *temenos* is rectangular in plan and measures about 55×80 m., as revealed by the traces of a wall visible above ground. A number of segments, varying in length between 2.00–16.50 m., that project above the surface have enabled us to reconstruct its ground plan. These segments are located along the western side of the *peribolos,* at its southwest corner, along its southern wall (three segments) and at its southeast corner, where the wall makes a double right angle. On the western side is an area 10 m. wide, which is separated from the rest of the *temenos* by a north-south wall. About 5 m. of the southern part of this wall is preserved. A threshhold stone in secondary use was found incorporated into this wall. At one end it has a deep round socket for the door pivot and in its centre there is a rectangular slot for the door bolt; the other end is broken off.

Students of the Department of Classical Studies, members of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel and youth groups from all over the country also participated (see Ovadiah a.o. 1982). The manuscript of this article was translated by E. Heineman.

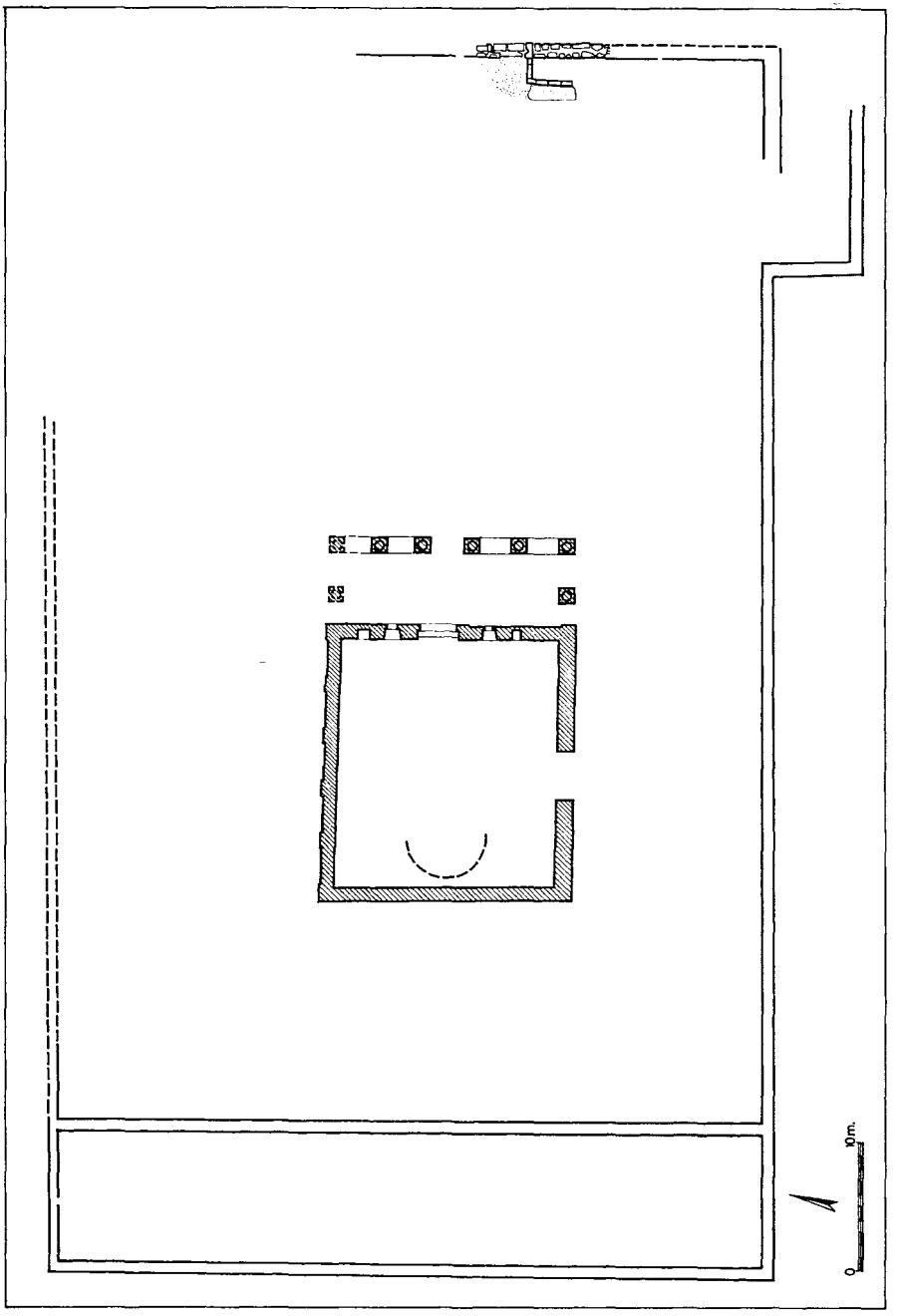

Fig. 2. The temenos.

The masonry of the *peribolos* is not uniform. Some segments, such as the surviving stretch of the western wall, are built of alternate headers and stretchers, as typical of the Hellenistic period, but in others the stones are arranged randomly. The space between the outer and inner faces of the wall is filled with earth and stones, a method of construction also typical of the Hellenistic period (*Pergamon V, 1:* Pls. XXII; XXIV:2). The cornerstone is preserved in the southwest angle, where only one course is visible. However, farther east the wall still stands to a height of five courses. Here headers and stretchers were used only in a few places. Occasionally, instead of one broad stretcher there are two smaller ones. A few of the stones have a central boss and marginal dressing. Only one course is preserved in the central part of the southern segment. Here the stones are roughly dressed and arranged as double headers and stretchers. Eastward along this segment three courses have survived (Pl. 25:2). The stones of the two lower courses are randomly arranged, while the upper course, which shifted slightly inward forming a narrow ledge, is composed of headers and stretchers. Most of the stones here are crudely hewn. Further along there is an additional segment of the south wall built of crudely hewn headers and stretchers, of which only one course is preserved. In the southeast corner there are four courses of headers and stretchers randomly inserted among stones of various shapes, some of which have marginal dressing and a roughly worked projecting boss. This corner was especially interesting because it forms a rectangular projection extending outwards from the *peribolos.* Judging by its location and the solidity of its construction, compared to the other segments of the *peribolos,* this segment was presumably part of a rectangular corner tower. The eastern façade of the *peribolos,* only partially preserved, was probably symmetrical in design and had a monumental entrance leading into the *temenos,* such as those of the sacred complexes of Helios at Kasr Naus and Zeus at Hossn Soleiman (Baetocaece) in Syria, where the *periboloi* are very similar to the one at Kedesh (Krencker and Zschietzschmann 1938:8–12, 67–78; Figs. 17, 23, 104, 110; Pls. 5, 31, 37). The "baroque" characteristics of this design correspond well with the general trend of Roman architecture in the Orient (Lyttelton 1974:221–222).

2. The temple

In view of the parallel walls of the *peribolos* and the temple, it is obvious that the two structures are an integrated architectural complex, although the temple did not stand in the exact centre of the *temenos.* The approximate distances between the temple and the walls of the *peribolos* are 27 m. on the west, 15 m. on the south, 19 m. (estimated) on the north and 42 m. on the east.

The temple consists of a rectangular cella and a portico (Fig. 3). Its outer dimensions (without the portico) are 20.66×22.63 m., its inner dimensions 17.60×20.04 m. and its overall length (including the portico) is 31.25 m. All that remains standing is the east façade of the cella, which is preserved to a height of 7.50 m., or 14 courses (Pl. 26). The façade has three carved and ornamented entrances: a central opening symmetrically flanked by two smaller ones. Of its three other walls, only the foundations or lower courses remain. The neatly worked ashlars are laid according to the typical Roman dry-wall method, smoothly fitted to each other. Most of the blocks are either crystallized limestone *(malaka)* or dolomite (the latter from the region of Manara), while some cretaceous and lithographic limestone was also

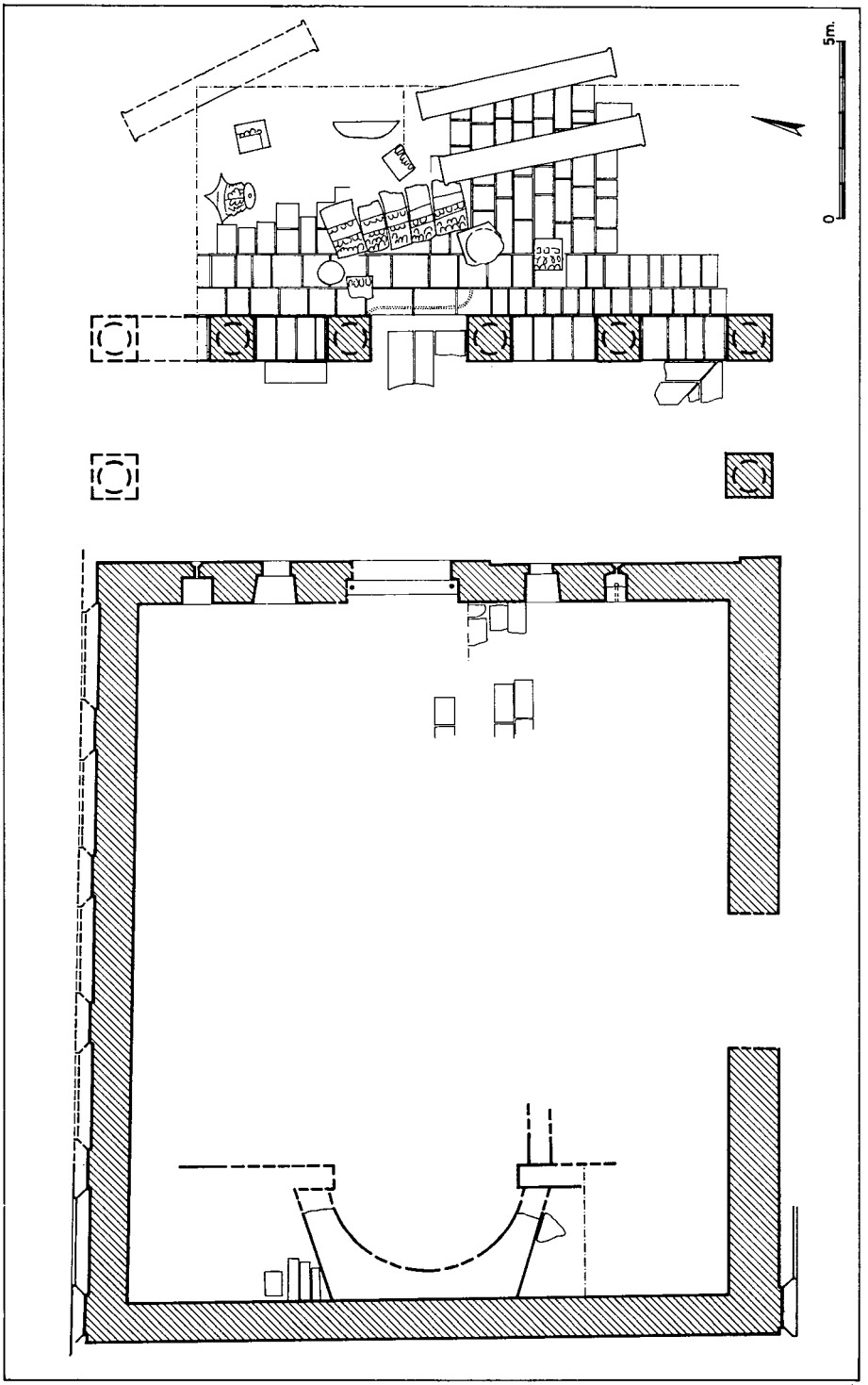

Fig. 3. The temple.

used (e.g., in the lower courses of the central entrance threshold).[2]

No remnants or indications of columns were found inside the cella to suggest that this inner space was divided into aisles. Nor were there traces of any piers against the north and south walls that might have supported the roof. This suggests that the roof, despite the considerable width of the hall (17.60 m.), was not supported by columns but by other means. Although uncommon, this would not be exceptional, as may be seen from the reconstructions of some Roman temples in Syria, such as the Great Temple at Kal'at Fakra and the temple at Der el Kal'a (Krencker and Zschietzschman 1938:1–3, 40–46; Pls. 2, 20), both of which have an inner width of 15 m. The roof could have been supported by transverse wooden beams, which, in turn, carried a series of lighter timbers or crossrafters intersecting and slotted into the transverse beams. It is also possible that in order to reduce the span of the beams they rested on consoles fitted against the north and south walls of the temple. This was probably the method used to support the roof structure in several Roman temples in Syria, like those at Kasr Naus, Hossn Niḥa and Majdal Anjar (*ibid.*: 13–19, 128–129, 182–191; Pls. 7, 8, 56, 58, 59, 74d–e). During the excavation of the portico many fragments of terracotta tiles were found, both of *solenes* and *kalypteres,* which obviously had been used to cover the roof of the cella.

A paved section of neatly fitted rectangular slabs was found in the eastern part of the hall, approximately on the same level as both the southern entrance threshold and the pavement of the portico. There were also traces of the underpinnings of three steps leading down from the central entrance threshold to the floor of the cella.

An apse, measuring 5.60 m. across, abutted onto the inner side of the western wall of the cella, opposite its central entrance. This was evidently intended for a statue or relief of the deity to whom the temple was dedicated, a kind of *adyton,* such as those of the temples at Rahle, Burkush and Palmyra (*ibid.*:226–228, 240–243; Pls. 94, 96, 100; Gawlikowski and Pietrzykowski 1980). This apse was apparently not contemporary with the temple but added at a later date. Within the apse were stones that had fallen from its vault, which should enable its eventual reconstruction. It is possible that further excavation of the temple will yield architectural finds of the sort that will help to clarify its interior layout. Some of the masonry courses of the east façade are clearly shifted out of line (Pl. 27:1), and a similar disturbance is evident in the keystones above the two side entrances. This could have been caused by an earthquake some time in the past. One likelihood is the devastating earthquake of May 19, 363 C.E. that affected the entire region, from northern Galilee to Petra and from the Mediterranean coast to the Jordan Valley (Russel 1980; Hammond 1980).

The central entrance

The central entrance is not entirely preserved; its north side was demolished at some stage and partially but carelessly restored. Its southern doorjamb is preserved *in situ* (Pl. 28), while several of its architectural elements were recovered during the excavation of the portico (see below). From the excavations it emerged that the threshold of the southern entrance, which consists of a well hewn stone slab, was some 90 cm. below the level of the central entrance threshold.

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2 For this information we are indebted to A. Livnat of the Department of Geophysics of Tel Aviv University, who examined the various kinds of building stones of the temple during a visit to the site.

It is not yet clear how the cella was entered, though at present the evidence seems to indicate that the priests used the two side entrances, since the southern entrance threshold is more or less level with the floors of the portico and the cella. Presumably, the central entrance threshold, higher by one metre than the portico floor, was reached either by means of a staircase,like that in the portico of the "Exedra" at Hossn Soleiman (Krencker and Zschietzschmann 1938:99–101; 41–42), or by a ramp, like that of the temple of Zeus in Olympia (Mallwitz 1972:214; Lawrence 1962:154–155; Figs. 89–90). There is a vertical groove 1.43 m. in height in the bottom third of the doorjamb on the side facing the threshold. The threshold, which is 1.04 m. wide and 4.64 long (including the width of the jambs), has two step-like levels. There are a number of regularly spaced square sockets cut into the upper level and two larger square sockets at each end of it (Pl. 27:2). The doorjamb groove and threshold sockets were used to hold a screen or lattice that barred access into the temple when its doors were swung open but allowed worshippers to see the statue or relief of the deity inside the apse. There are four square sockets in the lower step of the threshold, which faces the cella. The pivots of the double doors fitten into the outer, larger sockets, while the two inner sockets took the door bolts. The estimated width of the entrance between its two jambs is 2.70 m. The southern jamb, which is preservred to a height of 4.50 m., is 1. 03 m. wide. Cut into the inner face of this jamb are five parallel horizontal slots, each 14 cm. wide and set 93 cm. apart, which were probably meant to provide clearance for the slightly protruding bars of the door panels, thereby permitting the doors to be fully opened. Similar slots are found on the Golden Gate of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (de Vogüé 1864:12: Fig. 10; Creswell 1969:464; Fig. 527).[3]

The northern entrance

The northern entrance is completely preserved. Its neatly carved lintel and jambs are each cut from a single block (Pl. 29:1). The width of the opening is 1.03 m., and its estimated height, based on the ascertained height of the southern entrance, is 1.69 m. (So far, we have been unable to excavate the northern entrance due to the massive stones blocking it and the danger of the entire façade collapsing.). The width of the jambstones and height of the lintel are identical, i.e. 54 cm. The mouldings consist of a fillet (4 cm.), a *cyma recta* (7 cm.) a *torus* (2 cm.) and three stepped *fasciae,* increasing in width from inside to outside (9, 12 and 18 cm. respectively). The *fasciae* are surmounted by a *cyma reversa* and a fillet. The southern end of the lintel is broken but held in place by the adjoining stones.

The southern entrance

This entrance, also consisting of a monolithic lintel and two monolithic jambs, is similar to the northern one but narrower (width 0.85 m.). The height of the lintel and the width of the jambs are identical: 54 cm. The mouldings consist of a fillet (4.5 cm.). a *cyma recta* decorated with a floral motif (7 cm.), a *torus* (2 cm.) and three *fasciae,* 10, 13 and 16 cm. wide respectively (Pl. 29:2).

3 de Vogüé's interpretation as to the function of the slots in the Golden Gate (which was also accepted by Creswell) differs from ours.

Only three courses are preserved above this entrance, although when the site was visited by Wilson in 1866 he found six courses (*SWP I*: facing p. 226). The second course above the lintel bears a *tabula ansata* (0.42×1.54 m.) on which no trace of the inscription remains except for the letter 'O'.

In the middle of the first course above the lintel (both here and above the northern entrance) is a carefully dressed keystone with a projection on each side, which originally fit tightly into the corresponding projections on the two adjacent stones, which held it in place. Below the keystone (before it slippped) and its adjacent stones there was a narrow space that was deliberately left open in order to relieve and balance out any excessive pressure on the centre of the lintel by distributing it to either side. The use of a flat arch for relieving the weight above the lintel is a structural solution that was very common in Roman architecture and has generally proved itself (Robertson 1969:321; Pl. XXIVb; Marasović and Marasović 1970: Figs. 8, 14).

The krater reliefs and the niches in the façade

North and south of the two side entrances, one on each side, are reliefs of volute kraters with ribbed bodies, and above them small apsidal niches. A downward slanting groove runs from each niche, cutting through the width of the wall and leading to a larger niche on its interior face. The internal southern niche is rectangular (Pl. 30:2) while the northern one is arched (Pl. 26:2). The northern krater (Pl. 30:1), which is 1.67 m. north of the jamb of the northern entrance, is set in the course below the one that incorporates the lintel. The niche here is 40 cm. high and 30 cm. wide. The southern krater relief is 1.58 m. south of the jamb of the southern entrance and set into the two courses below the lintel course. The stone on which the relief is carved is fractured and the relief is poorly preserved, although the base of the krater, part of its body and one of its volute handles are still indentifiable. The mouths of the kraters are rounded concavities.

The function of the grooves between the outer and inner niches has been variously interpreted by the scholars who have examined them in the past. Thus Wilson (*SWP I*:227) suggested that the grooves were intended for confessional purposes, while Conder and Kitchener (*ibid.*: 227) thought that worshippers could drop donations of coins for the temple treasury into the grooves and in return get the priest's oracular message, without the latter being required to show himself. Our renewed examination of the kraters, grooves and niches indicates that these were elements of a system of libations. During the libation ceremony a liquid of some sort — blood from sacrificed animals, wine or oil — was poured into the outer niche and flowed along the groove to the inner niche where it was collected in a receptacle placed at the bottom. This ceremony was apparently part of a rite that connected the world of the living with the world of the dead (Oeconomus 1921). The fact that the temple at Kedesh is closely surrounded on three sides by tombs and mausolea strengthens this interpretation. The two eagles on the façade of the cella (see below) were perhaps also a funerary symbol (Ronzevalle 1911:14–15), as well as being associated with the god Baalshamin (see Section IV). By dedicating their libation offerings to the exalted and worshipful godhead of the temple, the relatives of the departed would seek to communicate directly with the deity in order to ease the plight of the dead. To the best of our knowledge, such a libation system for a funerary

ritual is unique in the temple architecture of the Roman world, and hence its existence at the Kedesh temple is of the greatest interest.

Cut into the block above the southern krater and niche is an apsidal niche,[4] in which a human figure wearing a toga is carved in sunken relief (Pl. 31:1). The upper part of the figure is unclad, while the toga covers its right leg almost to the ankle and its left leg from the knee upward, then crosses the body diagonally until it reaches the left shoulder and folds over the arm to hang down in a flat drape. The folds of the toga are carved in broad, shallow relief; both the figure and robe lack plasticity and depth. The figure grasps in its right hand what seems to be some kind of basket-handled pear-shaped vessel with a pointed base; the body of the vessel is marked off by a small, shallow depression from its handle. The figure holds a spear in its left hand. Apparently the libation ceremony is symbolized by this relief, the vessel representing the pouring of the libation, and the heroic posture of the figure reflecting the true attitude of the worshipper. There are some incised lines, mostly curving, to the left of the figure, whose significance so far escapes us. The figure stands firmly on its right leg, while the left leg is disposed somewhat freely (contraposto position). The feet point in opposite directions. The heroic stance of the figure is reminiscent of many of the statues of Hellenistic rulers (Bieber 1967: Figs. 299, 685). Stylistically and technically similar reliefs dating to the 2nd–3rd centuries C.E. were discovered in Rome (Toynbee and Ward-Perkins 1956: Pl. 15) and in Stobi, Yugoslavia.[5]

Slightly north of the jamb of the northern entrance is a recess measuring 38×72 cm. with a roughly cut stone slab set into it. The ashlars around the four sides of the recess have countersunk borders that were evidently designed to take a stone slab that bore a relief or an inscription that is now lost.

The portico

The portico in front of the temple is of the same length as the width of the façade of the cella (20.66 m.). In our excavations we uncovered the stylobate (width 1.32 m.), three pedestals *in situ* (Pl. 31:2) and the emplacements of two more. These elements allow us to reconstruct a sixth pedestal, making the portico a *hexastylos* consisting of two groups of three columns each. The distance between the pedestals in each group is 3.62–3.63 m. from axis to axis, while the distance between the two pedestals opposite the central entrance of the cella is 4.10 m. The central entrance of the portico between the two central pedestals is slightly south of that of the cella, thereby upsetting the symmetry of the temple façade.

The depth of the portico, between the stylobate and the façade of the cella is 5.75 m. Between the southeast pedestal of the portico and the southeast corner of the cella another pedestal was found *in situ*. Presumably, another pedestal in the same position is to be found opposite of the northern side, but this area has not yet been excavated. These pedestals

4 A similar example of a single apsidal niche to the left of the main entrance of the cella is found in the temple inside the small *temenos* at Hossn Soleiman (Krencker and Zschietzschmann 1938:98; Pl. 40). In the temple at 'Ain Hersha two niches are discernible, one on each side of the cella entrance (*ibid.*:252; Pls. 106–107, 109, lower). In the temple at Hibbariye, there are four niches in the façade of the cella, two on each side and one above the other (*ibid.*:218; Fig. 327; Pl. 89).

5 Our thanks are due to Dr. S. Dühl of the German Institute of Archaeology in Instanbul, who has kindly shown us the photograph of this relief.

reduced the north-south length of the portico, thereby making it easier to span its roof.

The pedestals, which are 56 cm. high, are square (1.28×1.28 m.), and consist of identical elements (Fig.5; Pl. 32:1): a plinth, an elaborate profile with two *cymae* above and below a high *torus,* and a fillet. The column bases standing on the pedestals were of the Attic type, but so far only one base has been found (Fig. 5; Pl. 33:1). The plinth measures 1.26×1.26 m.; the overall height of the base is 48 cm.; the diameter of its upper flangs is 90 cm., exactly the same as the bottom diameter of the monolithic column that stood on it. The elements making up the base are a plinth, a *torus,* a *scotia* with two fillets, and an upper *torus.* There is a round socket (6 cm. in diameter, 5 cm. deep) in the centre of the base to enable the column to be joined to it by means of a dowel. So far four monolithic columns have been found (Fig. 5). One of them, which is 5.62 m. high, was entirely uncovered. On the basis of what is preserved of the eastern wall of the cella and from the various decorated architectural elements that belonged to the entablature found near the portico (see Section III below), the original height of the temple may be estimated at approximately 12 metres.

Several sections of the courtyard and portico paving were uncovered in the excavations. It consists of rectangular and triangular limestone slabs, carefully cut and fitted, apparently part of a *dromos* or paved ceremonial way used for religious processions, probably leading from the main entrance in the eastern wall of the *peribolos* to the temple.

The southern wall of the temple

At a distance of 8.81 m. from the southwest corner and 10 m. from the southeast corner of the building there is an opening in the wall which has been blocked (Pl. 32:2). The opening was 3.82 m. wide and its corners are smoothed and right angled. The blocking stones are set back some 10 cm. from the outher face of the wall and are about 10 cm. lower than the preserved upper courses of the wall. Presumably there had once been a side opening at this spot, which was blocked up at some stage in the past, but the function of the original opening and the date of its blockages are still unclear.

Outer face of temple wall

Four courses of the temple wall are visible in its southwest corner. The first course, which here appears as the lowermost course, is 45 cm. high. Further east, where the ground level drops, there is another, lower course, 42 cm. high, which protrudes about 11 cm. from the face of the wall (Pl. 32:2). The second course of neatly dressed stones, 36 cm. high, is carefully laid on top of the underlying one. The third and fourth courses, 50 and 60 cm. high respectively, are set back about 31 cm. from the first course. This was necessitated by the carvings of the second course of carefully fitted blocks, whose profile of pseudo-pilasters is meticulously and skillfully worked (Fig. 4). Another delicate profile of pseudo-pilasters was discovered running for about five metres along the western end of the north wall on its outer face (Pl. 32:3)). This profile is very similar to that at the southwestern corner of the temple. We therefore infer that the entire outer face of the temple incorporated pseudo-pilasters at regular intervals.

A rough dating of these profiles to the 2nd–3rd centuries C.E. is permissible on the grounds of their similarity to those on the city wall of Jerusalem below the present Nablus Gate (Hamilton 1940:5–8; Figs. 2, 4, 5; Pls. I–II; Hennessy 1970:22–25; Pl. XIV). This dating accords well with the other architectural details of the temple at Kedesh. Similar profiles are

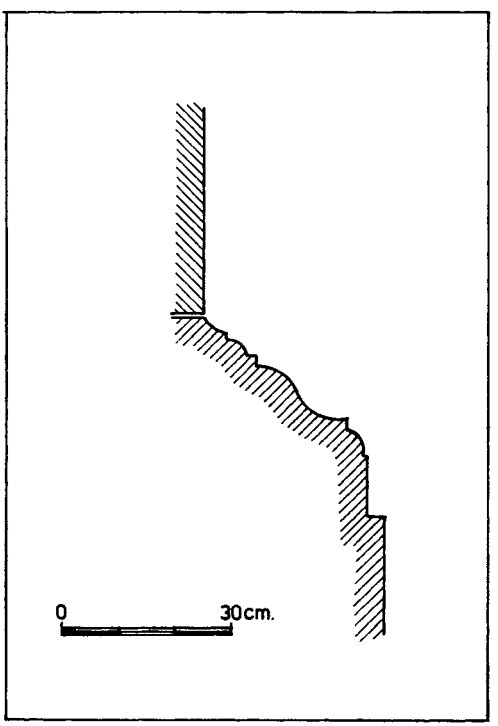

Fig. 4. Profile at southwest outer angle of the temple.

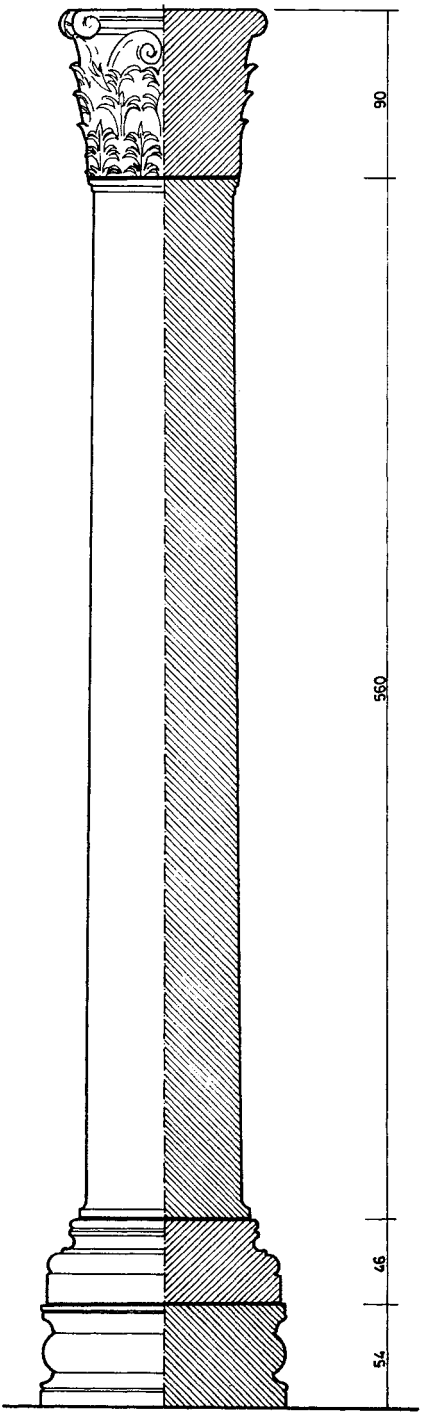

Fig. 5. Reconstructed column of portico.

known in temples in the Syro-Phoenician region (Krencker and Zschietzschmann 1938: Figs. 19a, 40d, 397).

III. ARCHITECTURAL DECORATION

The decorated architectural elements found in and around the Kedesh temple came from its portico (Pl. 33:1), the façade of the cella and the external faces of the other walls; they include fragments of the entablature (Pls. 33; 34), a pilaster capital (Pl. 35:2), elements of the entrances of the cella façade (Pls. 28:2; 29; 35:1; 36:1) and the pseudo-pilaster profiles described above (Pl. 32:3).

1. The entablature

So far eight decorated items have been found that apparently belong to the cornice of the entablature. Seven of these, which fell from the upper part of the portico, have a uniform style of mouldings. The eighth item, however, which has different dimensions as well as differently decorated mouldings, most likely belongs to the entablature of the central entrance of the cella. Because of the small number and the state of preservation of the fragments, it has so far proved impossible to reconstruct the cornice of the portico. The preserved dimensions of the fragments are (height × length × width):

Item 1: 0.68×1.00×1.33 m.
Item 2: 0.38–0.45×1.04×0.63 m.
Item 3: 0.31×1.26×1.04 m. (Pl. 33:2).
Item 4: 0.70×1.11×1.20 (Pl.34:1).
Item 5: 0.60×0.70×1.60 m.
Item 6: 0.45×0.70×1.45 m.(Pl.34:2).
Item 7: 0.70×0.95×1.50 m. (Pl.34:3).
Item 8: 0.22×0.49×1.00 m. (Pl. 35:1).

On the first seven items the following mouldings are distinguishable: (a) ovolo (egg-and-dart); (b) dentils; (c) *cyma reversa* (identical to moulding e); (d) modillions-and-coffers framed by an ovolo strip; (e) *cyma reversa* (identical to moulding c); (f) fluted corona; (g) *astragal*; (h) *sima* with *anthemion,* containing ancanthus leaves, palmettes and lotus flowers.

Although the eighth item (pl. 35:1) has the ovolo, dentils, *cyma reversa* and modillions-and coffers, which are similar to the mouldings listed above, it differs in several respects from the entablature items of the portico:

(1) The *cyma reversa* above the ovolo is not decorated with the usual relief of stylized leaves but left plain. This combination of decorated and plain bands was common in the architecture of the East Roman Empire (*Baalbek I:* Pl. 102, upper).

(2) There is no decoration between the modillions-and coffers and the corona.

(3) The corona was left blank. The astragal is simply a moulding without the bead-and-reel decoration, and the *sima* is an undecorated *torus.*

This item must have come from just above the right-hand corner of the central doorway of the cella façade (cf. *Baalbek II:* Fig. 39; Pl. 50).

Following is a detailed description of the eight different types of mouldings of the seven items from the entablature of the portico and an assessment of their place within the architec-

tural decoration of the East Roman Empire in general and of the Syro-Phoenician region in particular.

(a) Ovolo.

The ovolo is commonly decorated with an alternating pattern of eggs-and-tongues, eggs-and-darts, eggs-and-leaves, etc. The egg-and-dart pattern first appeared in the 1st century B.C.E. During the Flavian period its constituent elements became more pronounced. This design, which produces an attractive interplay of light and shadow, continued with minor variations throughout the Roman period (Weigand 1914:51; Weigand 1924–1925:169–170; von Blanckenhagen 1940:110). During the Hadrianic period, the egg-and-leaf design (known in Classical and Hellenistic times) had a brief revival (Strong 1953:148; Fig.1), but during the Antonine period the egg-and-dart regained its popularity (Kähler 1939:70–71).

On our egg-and-dart pattern the shell enclosing the egg is emphasized by the cleavage intervening between the two and by the distinct carving of the darts. The plasticity of the egg within its broad shell and the strongly accented darts are typical of the Antonine period (von Blanckenhagen 1940:110). The strict use of the dart pattern indicates a chronological range within the above periods, but more likely the latter, since already during the Severan period the dart was often replaced by a broader curved line, while later also leaves and flowers alternated with the egg form (*Baalbek II:* Figs. 143–144).

(b) The dentils

On Roman entablatures the dentils are often combined with the egg-and-dart pattern in one moulding. The occurance of ovolo, dentils and *cyma reversa* in a decorative sequence between the frieze and the cornice allows us to fix both the typology and chronology of these elements on the basis of their dimensional ratios. Thus, during the Classical period the dentils were large and broad and the ratio between them and the ovolo was 2:1 (Weigand 1924–1925:174). Over time a more moderate ratio prevailed and the sizes of these elements became almost the same. During the Antonine and Severan periods the balance turned in favour of the ovolo, as its elements were more strongly emphasized, both by increasing the space between the egg and its shell and by making the separating device (dart, leaf, riband, etc.) more conspicuous. On the other hand, the dentils changed very little over this period. The dentils on the architectural items at Kedesh, as usual in the Syro-Phoencian region in the 2nd–3rd centuries C.E., lack connecting links: this contrasts with the practice in Asia Minor where the dentils are always linked by bars or rings (Strong 1953:148–150; Leon 1971:269).

(c) The cyma reversa

The *cyma reversa* appears twice on the cornice, once on the third moulding from below and once on the fifth. The *cyma reversa,* which is identical on both mouldings and similar to that on the southern jamb of the central doorway of the cella (see below), is of the so-called "Syrian" type (Weickert 1913:105). The flower of the *cyma reversa* is fitted to the contour of the central leaf and divided into two parts by a deep groove (Weigand 1924–1925: Figs. A5, A6). A thin link is discernible between the two sides of the groove on almost every flower (Weigand 1914: Figs. 33A, 34B). The separating flower has outspread wing-like petals, like those decorating the Temple of Bacchus at Baalbek (Weigand 1924–1925: Fig. A7). The petals gradually became more outspread until the flower was depicted as completely open (*ibid.*: Fig.

A10). It is notable that the fifth moulding forms the soffit of the corona; this is quite a rare phenomenon and a good indication of the artists' ability to vary their ornamental patterns.[6]

(d) Modillions-and-coffers

Modillions-and-coffers below the corona are integral elements of the traditional Roman Corinthian style as known from the Augustan period onwards. This decoration originated in the ornamental stone and stucco work of the Hellenistic period (Strong 1963:78–79).

The modillions-and-coffers of the Kedesh entablature are framed by an ovolo, as was common in the Eastern Mediterranean from the 2nd century B.C.E. on, whereas in the Roman West a *cyma* was used for this frame (Lyttelton 1974:92, 246–247, 264, 266). At Baalbek a special type of modillion with two parallel grooves was developed (Weigand 1914:86), which was employed at other Syro-Phoenian sites as well (*Baalbek II:* Fig. 15c; Krencker and Zschietzschmann 1938: Figs. 141, 285). The modillions at Kedesh are decorated with reliefs of acanthus leaves and palmettes , as was usual in Asia Minor in the 2nd century C.E. (Lyttelton 1974:269). On the entablature fragments that have been preserved, the decoration of the soffit of the modillions includes stylized flowers, branches, acanthus leaves and S-form spirals (normal and reversed). Within the coffers appear stylized floral motifs in low relief, including four-and five-petalled rosettes. Parallels are found in the Syro-Phoenician region in general and at Baalbek in particular (*Baalbek I:* Pls. 90, 102, 103; *Baalbek II:* Figs. 29; Pls. 67–68; Weigand 1914: Pl. 5:1). There are also three unique motifs that were previously unknown on these mouldings: a *cithara,* a basin standing on a tripod and a crescent with a star (Pl. 33:2). Modillions with floral decoration, which are of Hellenistic origin, are well known in the architecture of the Augustan period and common on many buildings of the 2nd–3rd centuries C.E. in the Syro-Phoenician region (Weigand 1914:54; *Pergamon II:*81).

(e) The cyma reversa

See moulding c, above.

(f) The corona

The transition from the soffit of the corona decorated with a *cyma reversa* to the corona itself consists of a *torus.* The corona is carved with flutes, a common ornamentation of the 2nd–3rd centuries C.E. in the Eastern Mediterranean (Weigand 1914:84). The fluted corona is also known in Rome during the Augustan period, where it continues throughout the Flavian and Antonine periods, but afterwards a plain corona was preferred in Rome and in Asia Minor (Strong 1953: Figs. 4–5), although on certain 2nd century C.E. buildings in Asia Minor the fluted corona still appeared *Pergamon IV:* Pls. 34–35). This may have been due to Syrian influence. At any rate, in Syria during the 2nd–3rd centuries C.E. the fluted corona was used almost exclusively (e.g., at Baalbek, Gerasa, Bostra, Palmyra; *Baalbek I:* Pl. 25; Butler 1903: ill. 226; Weigand 1914: Fig. 9; Lyttelton 1974: Fig. 165), although sometimes the meander pattern was used instead (*Baalbek I:* Pl. 22). Fluting is connected with a development in the architectural decorative style that came to prefer less elaborate elements, such as the "fluting and acanthus capitals" (Ward-Perkins 1948:68–70). The concavity of the flutes produced an

6 A similar instance of the location of a *cyma reversa* moulding is found at the small temple in ancient Philadelphia, modern Amman (Butler 1903:43).

attractive three-dimensional effect allowing an interplay of light and shadow like that already noted with the egg-and-dart moulding.

(g) The astragal

The corona is separated from the *sima* by an *astragal,* as characteristic of 2nd–3rd centuries C.E. entablatures, especially in Syria. The *astragal* pattern of the entablature closely resembles the astragals on the doorjamb and lintel of the façade of the cella (see below).

(h) The sima

The *sima,* the uppermost element of the Roman cornice, is decorated with reliefs of acanthus leaves and palmettes, sometimes with intertwined lotus flowers in a recurring rhythmic pattern. The fragmentary items that have survived at Kedesh indicate that the *sima* was decorated with curled palmettes alternating with stylized split acanthus leaves, natural acanthus and lotus flowers or lotus calyces. Unfortunately, the fragmentary nature of the architectural items makes it difficult to reconstruct a continuous sequence of the *sima,* although it probably consisted of these four motifs (Riegl 1893:252–257; Weigand 1914:87). This is a more varied range of motifs than the "intermitierende Akanthusranke" customary in Roman architecture and resembles those found at Baalbek (*Baalbek I:* Pl. 25; *Baalbek II:* Figs. 14, 19). Another similarity with Baalbek is the *anthemion* of the *sima,* which continues the tradition of the acanthus-scroll motif (Riegl 1893:248–252; Weigand 1914:55; Weigand 1924–1925:87).

2. The pilaster capital

Among the capitals that decorated the temple at Kedesh is a Corinthian pilaster capital (Pl. 35:2), found in front of the portico (Pl. 33:1). This capital has several characteristics in common with elements of the entablature. A number of criteria permit us to establish its typological and chronological classification. The decorative elements clearly assign it to the extensive series of Corinthian capitals of the Syro-Palestinian type made of local limestone that can be roughly dated to the 2nd–3rd centuries C.E. (Watzinger 1935:99; Fischer 1979: No. 260). The capital is carved on three of its four sides, and the pilaster that it crowned probably stood at the northeast corner of the cella (see Fig. 3). The arrangement of the motifs displays a certain rigidity of conception, as expressed by the placement of the acanthus leaves of the first row as single and discrete units, without any sort of link between them. The leaves of the second row, also unconnected units, project somewhat above those of the first; their central vein merges with the mass of the *calathus,* which enhances the impression of their growing naturally out of the latter. In the centre of the capital above the second row of leaves there is an additional acanthus leaf. All the leaves are of the Syrian acanthus type, which is common in the architectural decoration of the Roman East (Heilmeyer 1970:105; Pls. 25–28, 31–33; Fischer 1979:51–52). The lobes of these leaves are divided by numerous deep fissures, the central lobe having five tips instead of the usual four. Apparently the five-tipped lobe originated in the workshop of the Trajaneum at Pergamon and from there spread throughout the Roman world in the second century C.E. (Heilmeyer 1970:90–97). The calyces growing behind the second row of leaves lack *cauliculi* and are divided into two by two triangles, set one above the other; the helices and volutes (the latter are not preserved) stem from the calyces. The helices are narrow with a wide central channel and terminate in an emphasized

knob. A large stemless flower occupies the centre of the moulded abacus.

The capital bears a number of drill marks. It should be noted that the use of the drill in sculptural and architectural carvings is common from the Flavian period onwards, becoming more frequent in the Antonine period and virtually standard during the Severan period. Pilaster capitals similar to ours are found at Pergamon and Baalbek in architectural assemblages dated to the middle of the 2nd century C. E. (Heilmeyer 1970:92–93; Pl. 36:1; *Baalbek II:* Pl. 54). In the light of the above data, our pilaster capital can be assigned to the repertoire of the capitals typical of the Antonine period. It constitutes an important link in the prolonged building stages of the temple complex at Kedesh.

3. The central entrance

Of the central doorway of the cella the following decorative architectural items are preserved: the southern doorjamb, the northern doorjamb, half the lintel and one of the two consoles. To these should be added the two entablature fragments, one of which was described in detail above (Item 8; Pl. 35:1).

The southern doorjamb

The southern doorjamb (Pl. 28:2) found *in situ,* is a monolith measuring 4.50 m. (height), 0.60 m. (width across front) and 1.03 m. (depth). The outer face includes three *fasciae,* the first separated from the second by an astragal and the second from the third by a *cyma reversa;* the third *fascia* is framed by an *anthemion* of stylized leaves, which is bordered by a *cavetto* with a running pattern of stylized tendrils. The ratio of the widths of the *fasciae* is 1:2:2, and the outer moulding with the *anthemion* comprises one quarter of the overall width of the jamb. The general arrangement of the profiles and the ratio between them, along with the stepping of the *fasciae,* the types of dividing mouldings and the nature of the outer moulding are similar to those of Corinthian architraves in general and the architraves of second century C.E. Syria architecture in particular (Weigand 1924–1925:83).

The *astragal* here is similar to the one on the cornice. It consists of a "long angular bead pointed at the ends and connected by two short reels," a type "typical of the Antonine period" (Strong 1953:148; see also Weigand 1924–1925:172–174; Fig. B4; *Baalbek II:* Fig. 15a).

The *cyma reversa* is also similar to that of the cornice of the portico, including the "ball" at the top of the central leaf. The "ball" motif occurs on the *cyma reversa* of architectural elements at Caesarea and Beth-shan (unpublished) and various sites in Asia Minor (Weigand 1924–1925: Fig. A1–2; Lyttelton 1974: Figs. 184–185), whence it reached the Syro-Phoenician region during the Roman period.

The *anthemion* has series of stylized acanthus leaves alternatedly reversed (i.e. one stem up and one stem down) and linked by a leafed tendril (Riegl 1893:252–257; Weigand 1914:87). This style of depicting the linking leaves of the *anthemion* originated in Asia Minor in the Hellenistic period (Lyttelton 1974:264) and became common from the Flavian period onwards. It should be noted that this type of *anthemion* is more commonly found as the crowning moulding of the architrave along with the ovolo and as the decoration of the *sima* (Lyttelton 1974: Pls. 212, 220–222, 227; Applebaum 1978:100–101; Figs. D–E).

The *cavetto* is decorated with a wavy, tendrilled stalk, partly naturalistic in depiction. This type of *cavetto,* combined with an *astragal* and/or ovolo frequently crowns the architraves of

Asia Minor buildings dating to the 2nd century C.E. In Syria this motif appears as the crowning moulding of the architrave instead of the *anthemion* (Lyttelton 1974: Figs. 141, 143, 148; *Baalbek II:* Fig. 73). This *cavetto* design originated in the Greek painted pottery of the Classical period (Rieg 1893: 168–169; Fig. 76). It is a common ornamentation on the *sima* of several synagogues in the Galilee (Kohl and Watzinger 1916:116; Fig. 228), but it also occurs as the crowning moulding on the architrave on some of the pagan buildings in Palestine, such as the theatre in Caesarea (unpublished).

Our comparative analysis of the four mouldings of the southern doorjamb permits us to fix its date between the second half of the 2nd century to the beginning of the 3rd century C.E.

The northern doorjamb

The northern jamb (which was found among the architectural items recovered in the excavations in the cella) is basically similar to the southern one, except for its *cyma reversa* design, which is identical to that of the lintel of the central doorway.

The lintel

The lintel of the central doorway is only partially preserved (Pl. 35:3). It was discovered where it had fallen into the portico with its upper part facing downward. This upper part, still partly buried in the earth, was examined in the 19th century by Wilson.[7] The preserved length of the fragment is 2.18 m., the height of its façade 0.80 m., and the width of the soffit 0.41 m. (this width corresponds to the inner width of the doorjamb). The façade of the lintel includes three *fasciae,* separated from the bottom upwards by an *astragal* and a *cyma reversa.* The ratio of the widths of the three *fasciae* is 1:2:2, although admittedly the exact width of the damaged lower one is hard to determine. The dimensions of the mouldings are identical to those of the doorjamb. The upper *fascia* is crowned by an *anthemion* of alternately arranged stylized leaves similar to those of the *anthemion* of the southern jamb, and the *cavetto* above the *anthemion* is identical to that of the jamb. The mouldings on the right-hand side of the lintel turn downwards at a ninety degree angle to match up with those of the northern doorjamb. This, it may be assumed, was repeated on the left-hand side of the lintel, thus enabling us to reconstruct the entire decorative frame of the central doorway, although apparently the designs of all three sides were not completly uniform. For example the *cyma reversa* of the lintel is identical to that of the northern jamb but differs from that of the southern jamb in that its central leaf, instead of being a double arch, is divided into three unconnected elements, while the separating flower is V-shaped. This type of *cyma reversa* is rare in Roman architectural decoration in general and particularly rare on architraves, lintels or doorjambs.

As the architectural item bearing the frieze of the lintel is still partly buried in the ground, we shall confine ourselves here to a brief description of its main decorative elements. The frieze, which is set back in relation to the *anthemion,* has three naturalistic acanthus leaves on its right-hand side, along with scrolls of intertwining vine tendrils creating oval medallions which enclose bunches of grapes and vine leaves, stalks with tendrils, individual bunches of grapes, as well as figurative motifs such as a gazelle and a male head, perhaps a mask. All

7 Wilson (*SWP I:* 228–229) made a small-scale probe at this spot, which prior to our work, was the only excavation conducted in the temple complex.

these are characteristic of the "peopled scrolls," a common decorative style in Roman art (Toynbee and Ward-Perkins 1950). A cornice (Pl. 35:1), parts of which were found in the excavations (see Item 8 of the entablature), ran above the frieze. Similar cornices are to be found in other sites also (*Baalbek II:* Fig. 39; Pls. 25–26, 51–52; Krencker and Zschietzschmann 1938: Figs. 103, 131, 202).

The soffit of the lintel fragment bears two decorative panels. The outer panel is a square framing a relief of a wreath of leaves intertwined with flowers and buds. The wreath is tied with a "Hercules" knot, from which issue a short stalk and two leaves joined to an eight-petalled rosette. The central panel, which is only partially preserved, bears an eagle with outspread wings carved in low relief, although only the lower part of the eagle's body, its two legs and its outspread left wing are visible. The wing feathers, in two layers, are schematically depicted. A palm branch and a curling riband appear below the wing. This schematized depiction is typical of the eagles carved on lintels in temples in Syria and Lebanon (Krencker and Zschietzschmann 1938: Figs. 100–101, 200, 346–347; *Baalbek II:* Fig. 38). The eagle, along with wreaths and ribands, is a common decorative motif on the lintels of synagogues in the Galilee and the Golan, apparently due to the "baroque" influence of the gentile architecture in the region[8] (Kohl and Watzinger 1916:158; Ma'oz 1981).

Although the left part of the lintel is not preserved, its overall length can be calculated by taking the distance from its middle (i.e. the centre of the eagle's body) to its right-hand end (1.94 m.) and multiplying it by two, since the ruling principle of symmetry in Roman architecture presumably applied here as well. This would make the overall length of the lintel 3.88 m.

The console

A decorated console (Pl. 36:1), still partially buried in the ground, was discovered in the portico area opposite the central doorway. The console has a massive base, partially worked, that anchored it into the wall of the façade and a decorated part that projected outward from the wall. It measures 1.49 m. (length), 0.50 m. (width) and 0.60 m. (height). The decoration includes spiral volutes, the upper volute larger than the lower one. A lace-like floral design of rosettes and vine leaves is worked in the side area between the two volutes, evidently with the aid of a drill. The plasticity of the acanthus leaves that mantle the front of the volutes testifies to a high degree of carving skill. The console was originally fitted to one side of the lintel of the central doorway. In its style it recalls the "baroque" character of decorative elements at sites throughout the Roman Empire in general and particularly in the East (Krencker and Zschietzschmann 1938: Fig. 144; *Baalbek II:* Fig. 39; Pl. 50; see also Lyttelton 1974:229–239), and is a good example of the "baroque" tastes of the temple builders at Kedesh.

The above-described doorjamb, lintel and console of the central entrance are typical of monumental doorways of the Ionic type, which evolved during the Classical and Hellenistic periods. This type was described in detail by Vitruvius (IV, 6,3), who emphasized the continuous banding and matching up of the horizontal and vertical mouldings, and also referred to the proportions between them (Büsing-Kolbe 1978:82–83, 130–131; Gruben 1976: Figs.

8 It seems that the eagles on the lintels of the synagogues in the Galilee and the Golan are decorative rather than symbolic. Moreover, it should be noted that there are no references in the Talmud to any symbolic significance of the eagle.

164–166; Strong 1963:82–83). The architectural material from Syria in general and Kedesh in particular adheres to Vitruvian principles, but there are also divergencies. Although in its overall design the central entrance of the Kedesh temple is similar to the doorways of other Roman temples in the Syro-Phoenician region, its decorative elements have their own individuality, and we have been unable to trace any exact parallels.

4. The northern doorway

The front of the lintel is symmetrically decorated by an eagle with outspread triangularly tipped wings (Pls. 29:1; 37:2). Although the feathers of the wings are blurred by weathering, their stylized depiction is still apparent. The eagle's head is turned to the right, while its body faces front. Its eye is indicated by a small, drilled hole, and in its well-preserved beak it holds what may be a wreath, like that depicted at Dabburah (Ma'oz 1981:109–110). The legs are partly obliterated, yet their feathers, as well as the stylized tail feathers, are still visible. The carving is flat and lacking in plasticity. The bird stands on a concave object, probably Jupiter's thunderbolt (*fulmen*) (Cumont 1927: Fig. 1; XXXVIII:2; Avi-Yonah 1946:89; Pl. XXV:6). There is a rectangular base, perhaps an altar, under the *fulmen.* A wall painting in the Casa dei Vettii in Pompeii shows the baby Hercules strangling two snakes in front of an altar, on which stands an eagle (Curtius 1929: Fig. 97). The base and *fulmen* on the Kedesh lintel occupy the lower *fascia,* the eagle's legs and part of its tail the middle *fascia* and its body, part of its tail and its wings the upper *fascia,* while the wing tips and the head protrude beyond it into the *torus* and the *cyma recta.*

If a Jupiter's thunderbolt is indeed depicted here, it provides us with an invaluable clue as to the identification of the deity to whom the temple was dedicated—namely Baalshamin, who is identified in this case with Jupiter (See Section IV below).

Plant motifs are symmetrically arranged on either side of the eagle: on its left is a stylized six-petalled rosette and on its its right a festoon of flowers and leaves (Pl. 36:2). The festoon with its tendency toward plasticity, is richer and more elaborate than the six-petalled rosette. Modelled in the Hellenistic-Roman tradition, this type of festoon is a common architectural decoration (Riegl 1893:248–251; Figs. 129–130; Weigand 1914:79–80; Toynbee 1953: Pl. XXVII). A similar combination of flowers and leaves may be seen in the festoons of the *Ara Pacis* in Rome, which represents the classicist trend of the beginning of Imperial art (Toynbee 1953:90–91; Pls. XXV–XXVI; Kraus 1953:26). In the course of time this type of festoon became more "baroque" in character, and this is the style in which it was carved at Kedesh.

The rosette to the eagle's left, with sharp-pointed leaves emerging from its calyx, is a common type known in various types of Roman art; in architecture it appears as a decorative motif in the coffers of the ceiling or *geison.*

5. The southern doorway

The entire southern doorway is preserved *in situ* (Pl. 30:2). Its architectural elements are identical to those of the northern doorway but some of them are decorated differently. The upper and lower *fasciae* of the lintel are plain (Pl. 29:2). The middle *fascia* is decorated with a double garland of stylized leaves, with a six-petalled stylized rosette at its centre. (Drill holes are visible in the spaces between the leaves and inside the rosette.) The leaves of the garland, which are elongated and fleshy with a raised midrib *(spina),* point towards the centre of the

lintel and are alternately arranged in twos and threes. At each end of the garland is a plastically rendered double riband that "ties" it together and then undulates down freely. These tied ends are carved to appear as if they are "suspended" from two projecting L-shaped "hooks," each of which faces the opposite direction. Despite his efforts to produce an effect of plasticity in the "suspension" of the garland, the artist did not succeed in breaking free from a certain stiffness and immobility of rendition. This was probably due to the narrow width and flat surface of the *fascia,* which inhibited any free plastic expression.

Garlands of this type are especially common on the soffiti of architraves; they also appear occasionally on the mouldings that separate the various decorative elements of the Corinthian order (Gruben 1976:371; Fig. 310; *Baalbek I:* Pls. 82, 109–110). Such garlands with ribands descending toward the doorjamb belong to a category of illusionist architectural decoration that is found also on certain monumental tombs in Jerusalem dating to the end of the Second Temple period (Kon 1947: Pl. VII).

The *cyma recta* that crowns the lintel is carved in low relief with a spiralic scroll design incorporating six-petalled rosettes. This decoration survives also on the left-hand upright *cyma recta* of the lintel but was not preserved on the right-hand upright side of the lintel. This scroll design is one of the most common decorative motifs in Roman architecture. It recalls one of the patterns of ancient mosaic pavements (Avi-Yonah 1933:138, pattern B1; see also *AIEMA* 1973: Nos. 221, 223; Ovadiah 1980:109–110). The scroll is also found on doorways in Syria and Transjordan (Butler 1903: ill. 431).

6. Conclusions

Our comparative analysis of the decorated architectural items from the Roman temple at Kedesh points to a continuation of the Hellenistic tradition, as reflected by the use of the same motifs and by the variety and richness of the combinations of decorative frames and mouldings (Lyttelton 1974:246–247; Weigand 1914:86–87; Kohl and Watzinger 1916: 170–171). However, some divergencies from the Hellenistic legacy are observable in the Kedesh temple, for example, the additional *cyma reversa* moulding between the corona and *geison* of the cornice, which is lacking in the entablatures of most Syro-Phoenician sites, although in various places in Asia Minor and North Africa there may be an additional moulding in the form of an ovolo (Lyttelton 1974: Figs. 170, 184–185, 227; Caputo 1959: Pl. 66; *Pergamon V,2:* Pl. V:2). The additional moulding of the Kedesh temple entablature may, of course, have been due to the influence of the architecture of these regions.

Actually, the deviation at Kedesh from the norm of architectural decoration is not significant. If we ignore the additional *cyma reversa* moulding, what we have, in the final analysis, is the standard entablature of the Syro-Phoenician region. The entablature mouldings of the portico, especially those of its cornice, are designed according to a canon developed in the region during the middle of the 2nd century C.E. that prevailed during the second half of this century and throughout the 3rd century C.E. (Weigand 1914:86–87; Weigand 1924–1925:86; Kohl and Watzinger 1916:170–171; Lyttelton 1974:246–247). On the other hand, in Asia Minor a greater freedom of design in the architectural items as well as a greater richness in the repertoire of decorative elements is observable. These characteristics are equally rooted in the Hellenistic tradition, whose influence began to be felt throughout the Roman empire from the

2nd century C.E. onward (Lyttelton 1974:201–202; Strong 1953:134). The architectural items from the Roman temple at Kedesh are typical of the Corinthian style prevalent during the 2nd century C.E. The same decorative elements are consistently present at the sacred enclosure of Baalbek, where this style found its most brilliant expression. Undoubtedly, Baalbek was the centre from which these decorative motifs spread elsewhere and the artistic inspiration for various other sites in the Syro-Phoenician region, including Kedesh in the Upper Galilee. However, it would appear that although the builders and artists at Kedesh remained faithful to the artistic concepts and principles prevailing in the Roman period, they allowed themselves a certain latitude in the choice and execution of the decorative motifs. In this respect, we are reminded of the comments of Lyttelton (1974:271): "We miss in Asia Minor the touches of eccentricity and individuality which often characterize the architecture of Syria in this period."

IV. IDENTIFICATION OF THE TEMPLE DEITY

In the past it was suggested that the temple at Kedesh was dedicated to the god Helios (Wilson as cited in *SWP I*:228–229; Dalman 1914; Goodenough 1958:114). However, the epigraphical and iconographical data, in our opinion, point towards a different identification. These data include: (1) two Greek inscriptions, one of which was found close to the temple and the other in secondary use in the wall of the nearby village police station at Qadis; (2) two eagles with outspread wings, one carved on the soffit of the lintel of the central doorway (Pl. 37:1) and the other on the front of the lintel of the northern doorway (Pl. 37:2).

1. The inscriptions

Wilson (as cited in *SWP I*:229) referred to the first inscription mentioned above in a brief sentence, which is important to the discussion here because he found it himself and could therefore be reasonably sure of its relevance to the temple. He wrote: "Close to the temple, and evidently belonging to it, an altar with a Greek inscription was found, which I cannot make out, but have copied and taken a squeeze of."

Subsequently the altar disappeared and when Clermont-Ganneau (1903) wanted to transcribe and translate the inscription, he had to rely on an outline sketch made on the site by Wilson, which he found in the archives of the Palestine Exploration Fund. According to this sketch, on one side of the altar was depicted the head of a bearded man covered by a veil and surrounded by a radiated halo, along with an undecipherable Greek word. On the other side of the altar, between two stylized trees, was incised a 13-line Greek inscription, with an average of four to six letters in each line. Clermont-Ganneau found decipherment of this inscription exceedingly difficult. As he writes: "After a few palaeographical corrections — some obvious, others perhaps doubtful — have been made, the following is the reading which I believe may be obtained:

> θεῷ ἁγίῳ ..... Σεπτίμιος Ζήνω(ν) Ζωσίμου (ἀ)νέθηκ(ε)ν, IVE'? μη(νὸς) 'Α(ρ)τεμισίου ηι'.
> To the holy God..... Septimius Zenon, son of Zosimos, dedicated in the year ... the 18th of the month Artemisios.

As noted above, the decipherment and restoration of this inscription is a most difficult undertaking. However, as an examination of Wilson's sketch reveals, there can be no doubt with regard to the reading of its first two words: θεῷ ἁγίῳ.

The second inscription, which was incised on a stone discovered in secondary use in the outer wall of the nearby police station, was published in the beginning of the 1920s by McCown (1923). The inscription has seven lines, with an average of 15 letters per line. Its reading, as proposed by McCown, was incomplete as far as the date and the name of the deity are concerned. The inscription was subsequently transferred to the Museum of Beirut, reexamined and republished by Moutèrde (1923; 1925:355, n. 4; cf. *SEG VIII* 1937: No. 2; Alt 1933:100, n. 4; Applebaum 1975:127). The inscription reads:

[Ἔτους] γμσ'. Θεοῦ ἁγίου οὐρανίου συνγέν(ε)ια (*sic!*)
ἐποίησεν διὰ ἐπιμελητῶν Ἀννίου Ναγδᾶ
καὶ Λισέμσεος Δάματος εὐχήν.
[In the year] 243, the *syngeneia* of the Holy Sky God made (it) under a vow,
under the care of Annios (son) of Nagda and Lisemseos (son) of Damas.

As pointed out by Moutèrde (1925:355, n. 4), the year 243 in the iscription is according to the era of Tyre (126/5 B.C.E.), which is 117/8 according to the Common Era. As regards the "Holy Sky God", this obviously refers to the famous Baalshamin, who was an important god in the Syro-Phoenician region during the Roman period (Cumont 1929:118–124; Teixidor 1977:26–34). Baalshamin is known from quite a number of inscriptions, discovered variously in Palmyra (Seyrig 1933:246–252; 1949), Damascus (Moutèrde 1925:354–356), Hossn Soleiman (Dittenberger 1903: No. 262) and the Hauran (Sourdel 1952:19–31, 98, n. 2).

Three of the temples erected in his honour are well known to us: one in Palmyra (Collart and Vicari 1969), one in Dura-Europos on the Euphrates (Rostovtzeff a.o. 1939:284–309) and one in Si'a (Secia) in southern Syria (Butler 1916:373–380).

The full title of the god in the second inscription helps us considerably in identifying the deity of the first. There can be no doubt that the first two words — θεῷ ἁγίῳ — of Wilson's inscription, as published by Clermont-Ganneau (1903:133), the reading of which is quite clear, refer likewise to the Holy Sky God, namely Baalshamin. Moreover, the bearded head on the reverse side of the altar may also be identified as Baalshamin on the strength of certain Palmyran coins that depict this god in the same manner (Du Mesnil du Buisson 1962:320, 740, Nos. 24–26).

McCown (1923:113) already surmised that the original place of the inscription was "possibly in the temple of which the façade is still standing." This surmise was made quite independently of any knowledge of Wilson's altar and its inscription, of which he was apparently unaware. It is therefore reasonable to assume that both inscriptions originally came from the Kedesh temple, which means that it was closely associated with the cult of Baalshamin — and probably even dedicated to this deity.

2. The iconographic evidence

The two eagles that decorate the central and northern doorways strengthen the evidence of the inscriptions. However, since their relative positioning on their respective doorways is significantly different, we have accorded them separate treatment and evaluation.

The soffit of the lintel over the central doorway was decorated by an eagle with outspread wings (Pl. 37:1). An eagle in such a position is known at a number of temples in the Syro-

Phoenician region. Thus, the eagle with outspread wings is found on the soffiti of the lintels of the Temple of Bel in Palmyra (Seyrig, Amy and Will 1975:84, 182; Pl. 45), Temple A at Niha (Krencker and Zschietzschmann 1938:108), the Temple of Apollo at el-Hadet (*ibid.*: Figs. 199–200), the Temple of Bacchus at Baalbek (*Baalbek II:* 20, 22; Fig. 38), on one of the temples at Rahle (Krencker and Zschietzschmann 1938: Fig. 347; Collart and Vicari 1969: Pl. CIV:1–2), over the eastern gate of the *temenos* at Hossn Soleiman (Krencker and Zschietzschmann 1938: Figs. 100–101) and in the Hauran (Dunand 1934: Nos. 37–38). Although the eagle does not directly represent Baalshamin, its association with the sky and celestial symbolism is indisputable, and there would seem to be great justification in Seyrig's claim (1971:371, n. 4) that the eagle should be viewed as "simplement le symbole de la Providence célèste" (cf. Ronzevalle 1911:14–15; Cumont 1927:163–167; Sourdel 1952:29–30; Toynbee 1973:240–243).

Of far greater relevance is the eagle depicted on the front of the lintel of the northern entrance to the cella (Pl. 37:2). The fact that this eagle appears on the front of the lintel increases the likelihood of its being directly linked to the god Baalshamin. As evidence, we may cite the monumental lintel in the Temple of Baalshamin in Palmyra (Collart and Vicari 1969:162–164, 209; Pls. XCVII, CI, CV, CVII), whose front bears a large eagle with outspread wings flanked by additional motifs. In this case there can be no doubt that the eagle represents the god Baalshamin, while the flanking motifs symbolize his attributes and two companions. As an eagle with outspread wings and representing one of a triad, Baalshamin is known from additional monuments in the Syro-Phoenician region. These include an altar found in the vicinity of Tyre (Cumont 1927:163–167), another altar found at 'Atil (Dunand 1934: No. 19), a monolithic basalt model of a *naos* that originated in Si'a (*ibid.*: No. 30) and a restored relief from 'Ire in the Hauran (Sourdel 1952: Pl. II:1).

We are therefore of the opinion that the eagle with outspread wings on the front of the lintel of the northern doorway at Kedesh likewise symbolizes Baalshamin, the Holy Sky God worshipped by the people of Syria and Phoenicia.

V. SUMMARY

The archaeological research so far carried out at Kedesh has revealed a rich and elaborate architectural complex consisting of a *temenos* with a temple of the *prostylos hexastylos* type at its centre. The architectural decoration is in the Corinthian style with "baroque" characteristics. By virtue of its layout and architectural decoration, this temple is an integral part of the architectural and decorative context of the Roman East, especially of the Syro-Phoenician region. The temple is the southernmost link in the chain of Roman temples in this region.

The kraters carved on the façade of the cella at either side of the side entrances and the narrow channels leading into the internal niches were apparently connected with a libation rite that sought to establish contact between the world of the living and the world of the dead — an assumption that is strengthened by the existence of mausolea to the west of the complex and the tombs to its north. The two eagles carved on the cella façade also support this theory.

In addition to the types of architectural decoration, there are also dated inscriptions found in the past as well as in the recent excavations that provide evidence for dating the complex. Three Greek inscriptions, dated respectively to 117/8, 189/190 and 214/5 C.E. (Fischer, Ovadiah and Roll 1982) show that the temple was in use during the 2nd and 3rd centuries C.E.

It may therefore be assumed that construction of the temple complex began around the beginning of the 2nd century and continued in stages over a century or so.

Both the epigraphical evidence and the two eagles with outspread wings carved on the façade permit us to assume that the temple was dedicated to the god Baalshamin. Although it is still difficult to determine when the temple was abandoned, there are indications that it was destroyed by an earthquake, possibly the one that struck the region on May 19, 363 C.E.

What distinguishes the temple at Kedesh and makes it unique in comparison to the remains of other temples in Israel is its excellent state of preservation, the richness of its architectural decoration and, especially, the distinctive nature of the cult that was practised in it.

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